

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending and stand ready for further action on the merits. Claims 4 and 5 have been withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to non-elected subject matter.

Claim 1 has been amended for clarity. No new matter has been added by way of the above-amendment.

This Amendment is further to Applicants' Amendment filed August 27, 2003 which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. Applicants respectfully submit that the above-Amendment, when taken in combination with the August 27, 2003 Amendment is sufficient to remove the outstanding rejections. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and comments, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. A notice to such effect is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any questions concerning this application, he is requested to contact Garth M. Dahlen, Ph.D. (#43,575) at the offices of Birch, Stewart, Kolasch & Birch, LLP.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional

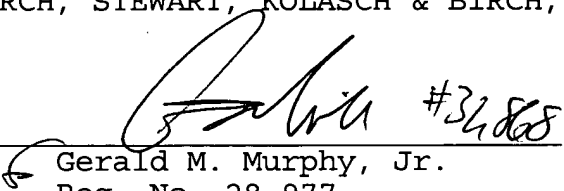
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fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under § 1.17;
particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By

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